

Summary/Final Minutes – Work Session – June 13, 2013

Savannah City Government SUMMARY/FINAL MINUTES MAYOR AND ALDERMEN WORK SESSION June 13, 2013 – 10:00 am

PRESENT: Mayor Edna B. Jackson, Presiding
Alderman Van R. Johnson, II Mayor Pro-Tem (arrived at 11:10 am)
Alderman Mary Osborne, Vice-Chairman of Council
Aldermen Carol Bell, Mary Ellen Sprague, and Estella Shabazz

City Manager Stephanie S. Cutter
City Attorney W. Brooks Stillwell
Asst. City Attorney William W. Shearouse

ABSENT: Aldermen Tom Bordeaux, John Hall and Tony Thomas (out of town)

Mayor Jackson called the meeting to order.

City Manager Stephanie S. Cutter stated that the original agenda has been amended as she has asked Mr. Eugene S. Kowel of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to provide Council with a response to the complaints filed with the FBI regarding the Savannah-Chatham Metropolitan Police Department.

Amended Work Session Agenda

Upon a motion by Alderman Shabazz, seconded by Alderman Sprague and unanimously carried, approval was given to amend the agenda to add an appearance by Eugene S. Kowel, FBI.

Radio System and Interoperability Presentation

Cam Mathis, Information Technology Director and Bob Davis, Manager of Mobile Services presented an overview on the City's radio system and interoperability that covered the current system coverage, timeline, funding history, future plans and needs. The radio system was established in 1996 throughout Savannah and Chatham County and expanded in 2005, 2009 and 2011. The Southeast Georgia Regional Radio Network (SEGARRN) was established and signed by both entities and currently operates in Savannah, Chatham, Bryan, Bulloch, Effingham, Glynn and Liberty counties. Interoperability exists within all locations through shared Emergency Management channels and was used on St. Patrick's Day with the Georgia State Patrol. This collaborative effort utilizes the National Incident Management System (NIMS) protocols and the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) digital radio standards.

The presentation included a table of the infrastructure timeline for Savannah, Chatham and other counties that listed local and grant funding for an analog radio system created in 1996, replacements and upgrades in 2005 and a digital system established during 2009-2011. A second table displayed infrastructure funding for future needs that included a radio system upgrade that

Summary/Final Minutes – Work Session – June 13, 2013

is an FCC requirement, hardware equipment for digital system development, microwave and dispatch system replacements for end of life vendor support and radio unit replacements. These costs will be shared between Savannah, other cities and counties. For current funding, each county pays a proportional share, along with grant funding. Future funding concerns are that grant opportunities are no longer available, and planning for impending upgrades is critical. Ms. Mathis concluded the presentation stating this radio system is very robust, extends up and down the coast and provides for interoperability between jurisdictions.

During and at the close of the presentation the following questions were asked:

Alderman Sprague: Can the military access our radio channel? Has the City looked at potential battery and charging issues? Do they conduct a practice run and how long is it? Is it a tower? Mr. Davis said by law the military has to use different channels and frequency spectrums than we do. We do have interoperability with them through a very specific set of interconnection devices that are primarily located at Fort Stewart, along with several of our radios. If a call was made over our radio, how long is the transmission and response time? Mr. Davis stated approximately ten minutes. They have several recharging options they utilize such as cigarette lighters in vehicles, generators, battery packs and fire departments throughout the City have the same supplies and keep extra batteries on hand. They do not have practice runs, but do participate in practice runs and scenarios held by the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) and other organizations. It is a computer-operated system that uses fiber optic cables, repeaters and microwave systems.

Alderman Shabazz: During celebrations such as St. Patrick's Day, can visitors, as well as the Georgia State Patrol access the same frequency or channels as our police department? Ms. Mathis stated yes they can access NIMS as long as their radios were preprogrammed. How long will the batteries/power sustain? Mr. Davis stated internally they have what is referred to as an end plus two redundant battery backup system that provides power for about one hour. Additionally, all sites are built to withstand a category 5 hurricane.

Alderman Sprague: Is Georgia Power a part of NIMS? Are the radios waterproof? Ms. Mathis said Georgia Power is its own entity, but would have a pipeline into NIMS if needed. No, the radios are not waterproof; they should be, but it's very expensive. How much are the radios? They vary in price, but the average cost for each radio is approximately \$5,600.

Alderman Bell: Are they still using Motorola? Yes, but they are working on a new system with 5 vendors and merging the old and new system. Alderman Bell wrote the study and Assistant City Attorney Shearouse wrote the agreement for the original system.

Mayor Jackson: Do private college dorms have access to this network? Ms. Mathis responded no public institutions have access.

An Appearance by Eugene S. Kowel, FBI

Eugene S. Kowel, Supervisor for the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) gave a brief report on twelve complaints filed with the FBI regarding the Savannah/Chatham County Metropolitan Police Department. All twelve complaints were investigated by Chief Lovett, and then referred

Summary/Final Minutes – Work Session – June 13, 2013

to Internal Affairs. Mr. Kowel stated they were all serious allegations, but none rose to the level of a federal violation. Alderman Sprague feels there is pressure not to document offenses and asked for clarification of police documentation of crimes. Mr. Kowel stated police departments nationally do furnish reports to them, but it is voluntary and there is no legal requirement that they provide their statistics to the FBI. The FBI is very interested in false reporting or civil rights violations and need to be informed of those types of allegations. Alderman Osborne asked if the police are called can a resident demand a police report. He stated he wasn't sure as each police department has its own policy. Alderman Johnson asked how crime rates are measured and interpreted, and are there recommended rules? Mr. Kowel said crimes are documented and compiled in various forms, but he doesn't have details regarding some form of standardization. Mayor Jackson stated they have asked Ms. Cutter to meet with Chief Lovett on these types of issues and to provide a detailed report. Ms. Cutter stated a work session will be scheduled for the month of July. Mayor Jackson also thanked Mr. Kowel for coming and speaking to Council about the complaints. Alderman Johnson asked Mr. Kowel for the size of his office and he said it covers eighteen counties and has approximately 25-30 people on staff.

Capital Improvement Project Funding Plan

Dick Evans presented an update on the funding plan for several major capital projects which includes improvements to President Street and General McIntosh Boulevard, the City's obligation to the School Board and drainage projects for Casey South, Bilbo Box and Baldwin Park. This update provides Council with the latest cost estimates for these projects which were based on bids received for the work. The drainage projects costs are 13 percent higher and the TAD projected costs are \$5.9 million higher than provided for by the current funding plan. Mr. Evans said it is time to consider the TAD obligation to the school board in their planning as it is due December 31, 2014. Additionally, shortfalls related to borrowing in 2013 and 2014 can be funded by TAD, and the required market value increment to support all TAD borrowings is feasible in the long-term. Recommendations are to award the contract for President Street work which is scheduled for the June 27, 2013 meeting, issue City-backed DSA bonds in 2013, and fund school board obligation with 2014 City-backed DSA bonds. These recommendations will resolve the funding shortfall, but will require General Fund support in the near term.

During and at the close of the presentation the following questions were asked:

Alderman Shabazz: Asked for an explanation of Tax Allocation District (TAD) and why it was created. Mr. Evans said TAD is a specific geographic district that City Council created on the east side of the downtown area that encompasses the Savannah River on the north, East Broad Street on the west, the Truman Parkway on the east and Wheaton Street on the south. It was formed to elicit support of the school board and the county to help the City fund two major projects: the correction of the low level of the General McIntosh and President Street area and the local share of the river walk extension, east of the Marriott.

Alderman Johnson: Did the last City Council approve the projects? Alderman Sprague stated TAD was approved about five years ago during her second month on Council.

Summary/Final Minutes – Work Session – June 13, 2013

Alderman Osborne: Who provided the original cost assessment for the project that is underfunded and now requires borrowing from other projects? Mr. Evans stated money will not come from other projects, but the original assessment was made by engineers who detailed the work required.

Alderman Sprague: Asked what is meant by market value and what was it predicated to do. Mr. Evans said it is the full market value of the property within TAD. It was predicated to develop within four years to its maximum state and if fulfilled, would have had a market value of \$575 million dollars.

Alderman Shabazz: Asked for an explanation of the annual debt service and how long will it take to pay off the bonds? Mr. Evans said it is like a house mortgage and when you borrow money you have to repay the loan with interest. Each bond has a fixed term of twenty years.

Mayor Jackson said she has a few items to add to the agenda:

- 1) A letter from Chadwick Reese that Alderman Osborne should continue to sit on the Chatham Area Transit Authority (CAT) Board;
- 2) After meeting with Paula Wallace, President of SCAD and hearing their presentation, she wants Council to hear the same presentation and go on a tour of SCAD's projects. She will have Sharonte send out some dates for late June or early July;
- 3) She will be working on funding for the League of Cities reception and asked for help in soliciting contributions to sponsor a reception and gifts. The event is scheduled for September 26-28, 2013 at the Hyatt and she is expecting between 130-150 attendees.

Council broke for lunch

City Manager Stephanie Cutter presented the City Manager's Briefing of the agenda items for the Council Meeting of June 13, 2013. The agenda is attached and made a part of the permanent record.

Mayor Jackson adjourned this meeting.



Dyanne C. Reese, MMC, Clerk of Council